

Steven Student

English 9 per 2

2 September 2001

Reading is Life

English teachers have an obsession with making their students read. Why is that? Everyone has been through high school English classes, and has been told by their teacher that reading is a key to success. It turns out that those teachers are correct. Reading is important to life as an adult. Adults need to read in their work, to become better citizens, and to improve themselves.

Reading at work is more common than most people think. In some jobs, it is obvious that the employee must be able to read—English teachers, for example, read thousands of paragraphs and essays every year. People who work with their hands, it turns out, are no different. Mechanics and hairdressers need to read directions and instructions; they also need to be able to read safety files about the chemicals they work with (Johnston). Actors must be able to read scripts—and then recite their lines with feeling. Doctors must be able to read diagnoses by other doctors, or lab reports written by the technical experts in the testing labs. Reading at work is almost as common as breathing.

Another reason adults read is to be informed about the world. Many adults read a daily newspaper so they can stay informed about what is happening in local politics or in world news. In an article on literacy, Arnold Smith writes, “Those who don’t keep up with the world by reading daily—whether the newspaper or articles online—are useless to society.” People can’t make intelligent decisions about who to vote for, where to send aid money, or even which dish soap to buy without pausing to do some reading on the subject. Labels in grocery stores have a lot of written information, and those people who don’t read them may be putting their lives and the lives of their loved ones, at risk by preparing foods high in sodium or with traces of harmful chemicals. People can certainly use radio news or TV news to get some information, but many facts are only available in print.

Comment [EC1]: Name, Class, Date.

Comment [EC2]: Title. This one is weak, but it’ll do. Remember, “Essay” is not a title!!

Comment [EC3]: This paragraph is your introduction. Notice how the writer starts with something everyone knows about, and narrows the idea down until the thesis statement.

Comment [EC4]: This is a very specific thesis statement. Reading it, I know that the first paragraph will be about reading at work, the second will be about reading to become a better citizen, and the third will be about reading for self-improvement.

Comment [EC5]: By repeating “reading at work” here, the writer is making a link between the thesis statement and the topic sentence for the paragraph. That’s a TRANSITION.

Comment [EC6]: Here’s another transition in the topic sentence of the next paragraph. Notice how it forces the reader to remember the main point of the essay, and to recognize “we’re done with that work thing...now on to the next point”.

Comment [EC7]: Notice how the quotations from the research this student did are neatly embedded in the paragraphs? Very smooth!

It may be obvious that reading for information and reading for work are necessary, but what about reading to improve oneself? Every time we read, we learn something, whether that is vocabulary or something about our own thoughts (Bloom, 2). Reading fiction can be a learning experience. Science fiction and historical fiction are the most obvious genres to learn from. In science fiction, characters often must deal with moral problems, and from historical fiction readers can learn about other cultures and what life was like many years ago. More obviously, people can read self-help books to try and improve their lives. People also read to learn new skills, such as cooking or crafts, or to plan a vacation destination by reading travel books or articles.

Reading is with every person, every day, from street signs to lab reports, and from comic books to self-help books. Most everyone will read every day of their lives, so it is a good idea for us to start getting good at it. As Mark Twain said, a person who won't read has no advantage over one who can't read (Clemens). Since reading for work, for information, and for self-improvement is part of adult life, we need to take advantage of our ability to do it well.

Comment [EC8]: This is another transition/topic sentence.

Comment [EC9]: Clearly the idea in this sentence came from this Bloom guy, so the student is giving credit to him.

Comment [EC10]: Did you notice how the writer never said, I or YOU? He used "we" or "they" throughout the essay. This is a good practice!!

Comment [EC11]: It's common to have a strong quotation in the conclusion to help drive home your main point.

Comment [EC12]: This combines restating the thesis with a kind of "now go out and DO IT!" push to the reader. It's designed to make folks want to take reading seriously.

Works Cited

Bloom, Harold. *Why Read?*. New York: Harcourt, 1938. Print.

Clemens, Samuel. "A person who won't read". *BrainyQuote*. Association of Quotemongers. 14 April 1998. Web. 11 August 2001.

Johnston, Agatha. "Reading Skills Too Low In the Workplace" *Maclean's Magazine*. 20 April 1998: 38-43. Print.

Smith, Arnold. "Literacy: How Man is Different from the Apes". *The Vancouver Sun* 12 July 2021. Final Edition. A3. Print.

Comment [EC13]: Your works cited is a separate page, and has the title Works Cited, plain and simple.

Comment [EC14]: Notice that all the sources are in alphabetical order by author, and they follow MLA rules. You have a handout on this—be sure you follow the rules, too!

Comment [EC15]: Note: The essay itself (from the start of the first paragraph to the end of the conclusion) is about 550 words. That's normal for a grade 9 essay. At university, essays are usually 3000 words or more.
Be sure that you have read your essay over, editing the ideas (does each sentence belong in the paragraph? Should I move this quotation?) and proofreading (Is this spelled correctly? Should I use "are" or "is" here?)